

Gaber, Slavko

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Reviewed by SLAVKO GABER

The book *Koji srednjoškcolci namjeravaju studirati? – Pristup visokom obrazovanju i odabir studija* was written as a result of the project *Socijalni identiteti, pristup visokom obrazovanju i odabir studija* (Social Identities, Access to Higher Education and Study Selection). The work is published by *Institut za društvena istraživanja u Zagrebu* and contains 302 pages.

In the introduction to this publication, Baranović Branka, the editor of this well-structured work by various authors, writes: “the purpose of this book is to present the results of empirical research of the social, institutional and individual aspects of the decision of Croatian secondary school pupils regarding the continuation of their education on the level of higher education and their selection of study area” (ibid. p. 4).

The research that forms the basis for the preparation of the work in question was undertaken in 2014 in 98 secondary schools (grammar schools, three-year vocational schools and four-year vocational schools), involving a sample of 2,106 secondary school pupils. The project was executed by the Centre for the Study and Development of Education, Institute for Social Issues in Zagreb. The research group comprised: Dr Branislava Baranović (project leader), Dr Karin Doolan, Dr Ivana Jugović, Olgica Klepač, Dr Iva Košutić and Dr Saša Puzić. (cf ibid., 5). This research team wrote the individual chapters of the presented work, with the addition of two texts by foreign authors (Zgaga, Farnell).



The work has three parts.

1. In the first part, the texts address the social and theoretical frameworks of the analysis of access from the selection of study on the part of students from various social profiles, genders, etc. In this part, particular mention should be made of:
  - a) Bourdieu's conceptual framework and theoretical practice as a point of departure for the study as a whole;
  - b) the authors' emphasis on the social and gender dimensions of higher education in Croatia. This emphasis makes an important contribution to the relevance, focus and breadth of the treatment of the problem of equality both in socialist and capitalist society, as well as contributing to an analysis of the reproduction of inequality in the field of education.
2. The second part of the book contains texts presenting the empirical part of the research, extending from its conceptualisation to a presentation of a significant part of the results. Part of these results is still awaiting treatment, and in the future could represent the basis for similar comparative research in the region. The research presented here again confirms certain already classic theses regarding the link between the decision to continue studying, as well as the type and prestige of the study, and the cultural, social and economic capital of the study candidate's family. In addition to this type of capital, the researchers determine that the type of school attended by the candidate, as well as the teaching staff active in that school, are also of crucial importance.
3. The texts in the third part of the book deal with questions ranging from identification of the obstacles faced by aspiring students prior to continuing higher education study, to an insight into addressing social dimensions within the framework of the Bologna process and the care for higher education in the European Union and in other international organisations.

After a presentation of the obtained results concerning the interconnected personal, institutional and social factors that lead to decisions on whether or not to continue study and on the choice of study, the conclusion of the work systematically summarises the results of the study and documents the researchers' recommendations aimed at reducing the obstacles faced by various segments of youth in Croatia regarding equal access to higher education.

With the research in question, the Croatian scientific community and political subsystem have gained a well-conceptualised and empirically supported interdisciplinary study of one of the most relevant questions of the present and future in Croatia as well as in Europe. The work will be of use to researchers for their continued studies in the field of education and education policies, to students in the study area of education, and to school authorities in universities who will prepare mechanisms aimed at creating just and efficient education that is able to contribute to reducing the persistent reproduction of social inequality within the framework of higher education, a phenomenon that is also evident in other countries of the world. In its conclusion, the work identifies what the authors regard as systemic deficiencies that would need to be eliminated if the goal is to reduce the reproduction of inequality.